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ALBERTA PLANNERS' CONFERENCE



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ALBERTA PLANNERS CONFERENCE

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PREFACE

Regional planning was the theme of the second annual Alberta Planners' Conference held in Edmonton on November 14th to 16th, 1956. Sponsored by the provincial Department of Municipal Affairs, the conference was a meeting place for professional people either actively engaged in, or concerned with, some aspect of planning. The theme had been chosen by a steering committee formed during the first Planners' Conference in 1955. Topics at that meeting had, for the most part, been concerned with the legal and administrative technicalities of planning in the province. For the second conference the steering committee sought a broader scope and chose the theme of regional planning which, through the establishment and extension of district planning areas, has become an important feature of the Alberta planning scene. The principal topics covered were the objectives, elements and implementation of regional plans, and the extension and achievement of district planning areas. Three round table discussions provided an opportunity for an exchange of ideas on current planning problems, while the final session was devoted to reports from various working committees set up in 1955.

The conference attracted a large number of participants. Over twenty planners were present, in addition to representatives from: the Faculty of Education and Departments of Extension, Agriculture and Political Economy, University of Alberta; the Board of Public Utility Commissioners, the Provincial Parks Board, the Provincial Planning Advisory Board and the Departments of Agriculture, and Industries and Labour, of the Government of Alberta; Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and the Medicine Hat District Planning Commission.

The opening address was given by Hon. A. J. Hooke, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Chairman of the Provincial Planning Advisory Board. Mr. Hooke referred to the growing understanding and appreciation of planning in the province and of the work which is being done. He stressed the value of good human relations between the professional and the layman, that it is necessary for the planner to 'sell' himself as well as 'sell' planning. Mr. Hooke felt that this was one aspect of planning which deserved particular attention and the members of the conference were urged to consider how it might be achieved.

Each of the sessions in the three-day conference was under the direction of a chairman who introduced the chief speakers and initiated the debate which followed each paper. It was generally agreed by the conference members that this second annual gathering of planners was highly successful and that the opportunity to exchange ideas and compare experience was of great value to them.

Tape recordings of the whole conference were made as it progressed and the work of transcribing, summarizing and editing has been done by the staff of the Town and Rural Planning Branch. In contrast to the printed proceedings of the 1955 Alberta Planners' Conference, the following is not a verbatim report. Rather, it contains brief introductions to the chief speakers and their topics, and summaries of the papers and the main points of debate. While it is concise, it is hoped that this report is also complete and that it will be a useful record of the conference for all planners in the province.

Edmonton, Alberta,
March, 1957.

CHAPTER 1

THE OBJECTIVES OF REGIONAL PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

During the early sessions of the 1956 Alberta Planners' Conference the principal theme of regional planning was defined and its objectives were explained. Mr. S. Lurie, then Director of the Lethbridge District Planning Commission and now a planning consultant in the City of Lethbridge, introduced the topic and briefly stated the history of its origin. He also described regional planning as it is practised in Israel where he has had wide experience.

The Alberta system of regional planning was explained by Mr. L. O. Gertler, Director of the Edmonton District Planning Commission. He defined the primary function of regional planning as wise use of the land and the planner's task as effecting a balance between urban and rural land requirements.

Proposals for the extension of district planning areas in the province were also included at this time and the conference members were given an opportunity to criticise the suggestions which had been proposed. Mr. R.M. Rookwood, planning technician with the Town and Rural Planning Branch, summarized the objectives underlying the choice of new district boundaries, and enlarged upon the type of organization which would ultimately be expected to develop.

DEFINITION

Regional planning, as all planning, seeks to

procure a sound social and economic basis for community living. This it approaches from an areal or regional point of view with planning directed toward the whole unit: both the urban and rural environment and the shifting zone of intermediate use between the two. Areas suitable for regional planning must have some unifying characteristics such as economic, social or physical homogeneity, established administrative boundaries or a feeling of local consciousness.

The basis of regional planning was established early in this century by Patrick Geddes, who was the first to see that the house was dependent on the neighborhood, the neighborhood on the city, and the city on the region. Geddes broke down his theory into the well-known "three poles of simultaneous thinking" without which, he said, no plan could be successful. These were Folk, Work and Place, or Organism, Function and Environment.

Following Geddes, two schools of thought evolved. The first gave main emphasis to folk and work, and advocated the self-contained town surrounded by a green-belt, exemplified by the Garden City movement in Great Britain, the American Green Belt Cities, and the German "ziedlungen". The second school of thought placed relatively more emphasis on environment, especially on the region, as expressed in the American T.V.A. development, the Russian Gosplan schemes and the polder dam reclamation schemes in Holland.

EXAMPLE OF FOREIGN PRACTICE - ISRAEL

In his paper, Mr. Lurie reviewed the organ-

ization of regional planning in Israel, a country with a wide variety of planning problems. Israel has an area of 8,000 square miles, of which 2,900 square miles are arable. At the formation of the state, 80% of the population was concentrated in the northern coastal strip from Haifa to Tel Aviv. Immigration at one time reached 1,000 a day, and the main objective when the planning department was formed was the wider distribution of the new population. The results achieved are shown by the fact that in 1948, 50% of the Jewish population lived in Tel Aviv, whereas today the figure is 27%. It is hoped to bring this figure still lower in the future.

The key factor in the whole plan is development based on the agricultural potential. There are some raw materials such as chemicals from the Dead Sea and possible oil deposits, but agriculture is, and will likely continue to be, the primary industry of the country. The population absorbing capacity of the various regions is based on agriculture. The country is divided into 4 main regions, which are subdivided into a total of 24 planning districts, each with a proposed ultimate population of 75,000, excluding the major cities. The regions are city-centered, with their boundaries based on economic and physical factors.

In Israel the national policy-making body is the National Planning Council. On the basis of directives from the Council general planning policies are set by the National Planning Department. The policies are then passed on to the Regional Planning Officers, and through them to the District Planning Officers, municipal authorities, and private consultants. There is a Regional Planning Officer for each of the 4 regions, but some of the District Planning Officers are responsible for more than one district;

for example, in the Tel Aviv region there are 4 planning officers to deal with 8 districts. Private consultants are widely used, working out detailed plans within the policy framework established by the District Planning Officer. Detailed plans may also be prepared by the District Planning Officer, or by the Municipal Planning Officer in the major cities. Originally the planning organization was much more centralized, but it was found necessary to decentralize it in order to obtain quicker and better results and in particular to improve public relations. The present system has worked very well in practice, producing well-considered decisions with the minimum delay.

Final approval of any plan is given by the Regional Planning Board, with an appeal to the National Planning Council on matters of special importance. The system is more democratic than it may appear to be, since the District or Regional Planning Board would refuse to approve a local plan only if it did not fit into the general regional plan. The most important conflicts have been in regard to encroachment on agricultural land, distribution of population and location of major industries. All plans involving the loss of agricultural land are referred to the Preservation of Agricultural Land Committee, who consider possible alternative sites for the proposed development. For example, an industry wanting to locate on the outskirts of Tel Aviv or Haifa on good agricultural land would be directed to industrial estates or to sites less suitable for agricultural production. The District Planning Board might recommend location in the Green Belt in some special cases, but the Regional Board would make the final decision after reference to the Preservation of Agricultural Land Committee.

It is compulsory for every municipality to

prepare a general plan. If one does not the National Planning Council (through the National Planning Department) prepares it for them. The municipality can subsequently revise the plan, but until their own is prepared they have to abide by the official plan.

REGIONAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES IN ALBERTA

Regional Planning in Alberta is practised in five district planning commission areas, each of which is centered on one of the major cities of the province. Mr. Gertler, in his outline of regional planning objectives, offered the following definition of a city-centered region: an interdependent town-country area which includes a central city, and that area around the city in which the farming people and the inhabitants of smaller towns have come to identify themselves with the central city because they are linked with it, not only economically, but by frequent personal contacts. It is more closely defined by the area of retail trade than by the area of wholesale trade or, in Edmonton terms, more by an area within fifty miles or so of the city, than by the Peace River area.

The primary function of regional planning is to see the complete pattern, and its main objective is to balance urban and rural requirements. Land, one of the chief natural resources, is used both as a means of production and as space. Its careful use is vital everywhere but in areas of rapid urban growth a problem and challenge arises. Here the two basic necessities, land for production and land for building space, come into conflict. For example, in choosing a location for new houses or industry, a market garden site may be desirable, but if it is the only good agricultural site in the area it is irreplaceable. The industrial or residential uses should be located elsewhere. The planner must measure the real costs of

all alternatives and find the solution which is most satisfactory for both urban and rural interests. At all times the unique character of land must be recognized. Limited in supply and varying in quality, it is also highly perishable. When misused the results are not temporary but remain as part of the environment for many generations. An acre of productive farm land wasted by urban sprawl is an acre lost almost indefinitely.

Regional planning deals with the land resource as a whole. From the experience of city development in Canada and the United States, fine planning on the local level, in terms of the building of a neighborhood, is not sufficient. It has not produced cities which seem to be moving toward a reasonable way of living. The missing element is that which was mentioned earlier in this session: folk and work to the exclusion of place. Planning within a regional framework incorporates all three factors. It is concerned with such features as the overall shape of urban growth, the productivity of rural area, the relationship of land use and road networks, and the interrelationship of rural and urban patterns within the regional complex.

URBAN ENCROACHMENT ON AGRICULTURAL LAND

In Alberta the need for regional planning has not yet demonstrated itself to the public and, with the large amount of open space in the province, the necessity of conserving agricultural areas is frequently questioned. Are there really any serious consequences from the loss of land due to the spread of urban centers? How can we conserve it when it has proved so difficult in the lower Fraser Valley and the Niagara peninsula?

On a world basis there is no dispute about the

shortage of agricultural land. In national terms only 4% of the land is improved and the amount capable of being improved is limited. Alberta contains about one-sixth of the potential arable land in Canada. With a rapidly growing world population the maintenance and improvement of productivity on all arable land is gaining in importance, and will become more serious as the population density increases.

In regional terms there is a direct relationship between the availability and cost of local foods and the way that agricultural land is used. Fringe areas around communities are not just undifferentiated open spaces equally available at all times for accommodating urban sprawl. Differences in productivity on the fringe usually leave a choice of location for expansion and the regional planner should know what this choice is. The serious situation which exists in the excellent agricultural areas of British Columbia and Ontario are a natural product of the attitude that the city should be the sole concern of planning and that urban needs, in the narrow sense, should always be dominant.

INFLUENCING INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The members of the conference spent some time discussing the necessity of improved public relations between planners and industrial developers. It was felt that it is a valid objective of regional planning much more than of individual community planning to be concerned positively with industrial development. Planning authorities should be more closely in touch with development and should not only suggest suitable industrial sites but help to find industries to fill them. At present industrial and utility companies are making plans for expansion which are not known to the planner but which will vitally affect many as-

pects of his work. The situation would be improved if industrial representatives were brought into the planning picture, perhaps as members of the planning commissions. This has been done in the Pembina oil field with the establishment of a Planning Advisory Board which has made planning in this area a much easier task. In Ontario it has also been achieved but here the situation is reversed. Instead of the planning authorities assuming development responsibilities, the Ontario development organizations have asked to be given planning responsibilities.

A major problem which must be solved is the negative attitude of many industrialists to the objectives of planning. Industries frequently regard planning purely as an obstacle which must be overcome, not recognizing at the same time the role that it can play in co-ordinating existing and potential relationships. The planner must balance the cost to the community with the gain to the private developer. An example of what can be done is the control of the cement industry recently built in northwest Edmonton. The planning commission was able to ensure that effective dust-prevention measures were taken to safeguard development downwind from the plant. The cost of the dust-prevention installation was a necessary expense from the community point of view. In the long run it is also in the interests of the industry itself through the prevention of conflicts with neighboring properties which would otherwise occur. However, it is doubtful if the industry appreciated the intervention of the planning commission.

The establishment of a municipally or regionally financed organization to acquire land and make it available was mentioned at the conference. If the planner could have a hand in this and get the land in the right place, then he would have solved a major problem of regional planning. Action along these lines has already occurred in the Lethbridge Planning

District, where the Commission was asked to find a potential industrial estate for municipal acquisition and sale at a reasonable price.

The importance of public ownership of land in limiting excessive inflation in lot values is also worth noting. The experience in Calgary indicates that there is a solution somewhere between complete public ownership and uncontrolled private speculation. Calgary owns a significant proportion of the undeveloped fringe area and develops about one third of all land developed every year. The sale of these city-owned lots at reasonable prices has had a very sensible influence on the price of land generally.

EXTENSION OF DISTRICT PLANNING AREAS IN ALBERTA

At the 1955 Alberta Planners' Conference a committee had been appointed to investigate the establishment of new district planning areas and the extension of existing ones. Results of the investigation had previously been distributed to planners in the province who were now asked for opinions and suggestions concerning the proposals.

Ideally, district planning areas should be regions having recognizable identities based on natural boundaries and common economic and social interests. In reality it is not possible to satisfy all requirements and the solution lies in obtaining a workable compromise. The proposed boundaries of new areas and of enlarged existing district commissions, as shown on the accompanying map, include all the well-populated parts of the province except the Peace River country which was to be considered separately. These planning areas have been proposed mainly on the basis of information dealing with population density, industrial location, type of farming,

transportation systems, trading areas, assessed valuation, ethnic and social factors, and established administrative boundaries.

An attempt has been made to keep travelling distance from each planning office to the outskirts of its district to a maximum of fifty miles. However, it proved impossible to do this in all regions and the members of the conference agreed that the proposed areas were larger than desirable. As one of the important aspects of regional planning is the need of having day-to-day contact between the central office and the surrounding area, such contact may prove impossible if districts become too large. This was the chief criticism of the planning areas as proposed to the conference. A second criticism was the need for more trading area studies to point up necessary boundary alterations. One example was given of a community which had been included in a district with which it was not economically tied. In opposition to this view it was pointed out that there are many advantages in following established administrative boundaries and since trading areas are not stable they should not be an over-riding factor in determining the boundaries of future planning areas.

It was suggested, in answer to the size of the proposed planning areas, that district offices could be decentralized and have branch offices operating on a part-time basis. The necessity for this move was questioned and it was felt that by the time districts reach the size proposed each would be able to afford its own well-diversified technical staff. In the Edmonton District Planning Commission, which is now the largest planning district in the province, personal contact is established by assigning each staff member a particular area for which he is to be responsible. In this manner close relations between the office and the district have been maintained.

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CHAPTER 2

THE ELEMENTS OF REGIONAL PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Three sessions were devoted to the subject of the elements of regional planning and they constituted a major portion of the conference proceedings. The papers which were presented emphasized research methods and practical examples which are applicable to Alberta conditions.

The first report was given by Mr. Gertler who reviewed a way of estimating population by using economic base studies. This is a method which is being applied in the Edmonton region at the present time. In the second paper, Mr. Lurie initiated a discussion on how patterns of growth are influenced, with particular emphasis being given to factors which exist in Alberta.

Further elements of the regional plan were given by Mr. W.R. Brown, Edmonton City Planner, and Mr. N. Giffen, Planning Technician with the Edmonton District Planning Commission. Mr. Brown reported on major parks and urban uses in the country while Mr. Giffen's subjects were rural community pattern and needs, and rural land use planning. The final session on this topic included papers on the future function of small towns, and the size and location of satellite towns. The first was presented by Mr. A.R. Smith of the Calgary City Planning Office while Mr. F. Marlyn, Planning Technician with the Edmonton District Planning Commission, reviewed the latter subject.

ESTIMATING POPULATION USING ECONOMIC BASE STUDIES

Mr. Gertler stated that there is a basic dilemma in population projections for urban areas or for regions, in that the techniques applied for national population projection (i.e. projection of rates of natural increase and migration) cannot be applied on the local level. For local projections we must get at the causes of local population change, which are changes in the employment opportunities in the regional center. In the Edmonton region it has therefore been decided to base population projections on an analysis of the economy of the Edmonton area.

The Method Explained

To do this the following formula is being used to determine 'base' employment:

$$B = e - \frac{P}{\bar{P}} (E - X)$$

where e is local employment in an industry,
 E is national employment in the industry,
 X is that part of national employment in the industry working for export,
 p is the total local population,
 P is the total national population.

The object of using this equation is to find the numbers of employees in each local industry that are not needed to serve the local market. These are termed the 'base' or 'surplus' workers. The industries having 'surplus' workers are those that export their goods and services and therefore bring income into the community. The reasoning is that these in-

dustries are the growth factors in the economy, and that the size of other activities in the community is dependent on the size of these 'base' industries.

The formula, using census data on employment and population, is applied industry by industry. The result is an estimate of the number employed in each industry over and above the number required to supply local needs. From this the total number of surplus workers or total basic employment for the community as a whole is obtained. The formula includes an adjustment for exports abroad from the national economy, without which the estimated number of surplus workers would be too small. As applied here the equation is not in its usual form, but has been adjusted to be more useful in Alberta conditions.

One of the main reasons for the exercise is to find a basis for population projection. A consideration of past relationships and possible projections indicates the workings of this particular method. In 1941 the ratio of basic employees to total population in the Edmonton area was 1:6.20. In 1951 the ratio was 1:6.13. The consistency of the ratio is interesting because during this interval there was the war, the post-war readjustment and the discovery of oil, and in spite of these changes and the fact that basic employment, non-basic employment, and total population all increased considerably, the ratio between base and total population did not change much. On the basis of this kind of empirical evidence quite a number of American and Swedish centers have used such ratios in predicting the total population. By identifying the base (both its total size and constituent parts), then concentrating on the base alone and projecting it, and then applying the ratio already calculated for each center, they have made estimates of their total future population.

This method of assessing future growth is useful because it provides not only an estimate of future total population, but also a guide as to which industries are likely to grow and by how much, which is of great assistance in industrial zoning.

Example from the Edmonton District

The Edmonton District Planning Commission staff have worked through a projection of the base from 1951 to 1956 as a rough check on this method. From 1941-1951, there was an average annual increase in basic employment of 7.8%. If this rate of increase is applied over the 1951-1956 period a figure of 39,000 basic employees is obtained. Compared with a known population of 249,000 in 1956 this gives a ratio of 1:6.35 which is very close to the earlier known ratios, and in line with the general tendency for the ratio to increase as cities become larger. This projection of the base was done purely for the sake of interest. In practice the increase in the base is derived by detailed analysis, not by projection.

Criticism of the Method

The method is not without its critics, a particularly penetrating attack being the article by Hans Blumenfeld in the American Institute of Planners' "Journal", Fall, 1955. Mr. Blumenfeld claims that the method is not applicable to the large metropolis where the basic industry is no longer the 'export' trades but the integument of services supporting the other industries.

However, it may be that when a city gets to a certain size it merely has a different ratio, and what

we have called the base may be smaller but may still be the motivator of growth. Mr. Blumenfeld points out very well many problems in the use of the method, but his criticism does not invalidate it.

The ratio undoubtedly varies according to the type and size of settlement. What is probably required in using this method is an assessment of the kind of community to which it is being applied, and a thorough knowledge of the evidence available on the use of the method in other similar centers. A classification of cities and towns into 7 types has been made by the Canadian political scientist, D.C. Corbett, as follows: metropolis, suburb, market town or city, manufacturing town, resource development town, ports and transportation centers and miscellaneous. It may be along these lines that modification of the 'economic base' method has to be made.

Example from Scotland

A simple example of the use of economic base methods was the development of new mining communities in Fife at the time when the coal fields of western Scotland began to die out. The number of pits to be developed in a specified period was known from the Coal Board, as was the number of miners to be employed in each pit. Total population for the new communities was then estimated on the basis of one miner to seven other people, the ratio obtained from studies of similar communities in other mining areas.

Application to the Whole Region

In the Edmonton District some thought has been given to application of the method to the region

as a whole. One difficulty is that the necessary data are not available in significant form from the census for such an area. In any case the growth factors are concentrated mainly at the center. Dispersal of these growth factors in a desirable pattern throughout the region is the planning problem, but projection of the population is easiest from a consideration of the metropolitan industries. The smaller towns would require individual analysis.

Application in Non-Manufacturing Context

The basic or export industries are often thought of as being manufacturing industries. However, the method is also applicable in largely non-manufacturing centers such as Lethbridge where the basic activities would probably include retailing (including service stations), wholesaling, flour milling, and other processing of agricultural products, and provincial government administration. There are probably other basic activities, but these illustrate those typical of a distribution center, and to which the same method could be applied.

It might also be possible to apply the method to agricultural areas, since it is not only manufacturing that brings in basic income, but all kinds of production and service activities. This suggests the wider question of determining the export workers for the whole of Alberta, a possibility which is now being investigated by Professor E. J. Hanson of the University of Alberta. With this information it should be possible to apply the method even more usefully to the smaller towns in the province.

INFLUENCING PATTERNS OF GROWTH

This session was opened by Mr. Lurie with a brief statement of the general influences on community location which were summarized as follows: natural conditions, including solid geology, drift geology, resource location, water supply, humidity, temperature and winds; and man-made features including transport routes, water control projects, ethnology and religion, fiscal policy and land prices, trade and commerce, and industry.

Particular reference was made to the importance of microclimatology, and the marked changes in climatic conditions found within even half a mile in countries like Israel. Investigations in that country led to the production of 'comfort line' charts which were used in determining the location of new towns. It is interesting to note that Byzantine remains were found along the same line on which the new towns were being constructed.

INFLUENCES ON PRAIRIE COMMUNITIES

In western Canada many communities had been located by transportation authorities with no reference to local problems or comparative site advantages. Townsite selection had in the past been quite arbitrary, with the railways not only requiring a convenient watering point but also being influenced by the pattern of their land holdings and the fact that there was money to be made by developing their own particular parcels as soon as possible. For example, Calgary was originally sited at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow rivers in Section 14, an even-numbered section not owned by the C.P.R. The Company did own Section 15, therefore the station was put there and the town followed the station.

Similarly, at the present time, highway locations are often decided by engineering considerations alone, to the exclusion of many other important considerations. It was pointed out that much greater co-ordination was needed between various authorities in order to achieve the desired influence on community location and patterns of growth.

The members of the conference were asked if, within the last five years, anyone planning in Alberta had been asked about highway location or were involved in it. Edmonton District experience was that several useful discussions had taken place but that so far co-ordination had been rather unilateral'. In Calgary the planning department's proposals were usually rejected with exclusively engineering arguments about maximum grades and minimum curves. The difference in viewpoints was that the city's proposals were not governed by engineering standards alone but took into account all factors having a bearing on location. The experience in Lethbridge was that the Department of Highways had been very co-operative. Prompt action had recently been taken on a proposal following a discussion with the Minister.

MAJOR PARKS

Mr. Brown defined the purpose of major parks as filling a need for recreation and relaxation. Recreational parks provide playing grounds and facilities while ornamental parks, either artificial or natural, are used for relaxation. Many major parks are partly ornamental and partly recreational and may be provided on a city or regional basis.

The provision, location and treatment of parks

depends upon use, purpose, topography, location in respect to major urban centers, and finance.

Use may be on a daily, week-end or holiday basis. Parks used daily include city ornamental parks, small recreational parks for tennis, bowling and baseball, and others of various sizes such as Regent's Park in London or Edmonton's Borden Park. Those used on week-end basis include daily parks, facilities for spectator sports, and regional parks outside urban areas such as Elk Island Park and Edmonton Beach. On week-ends, while many urban dwellers go to the country, some rural people come to the city, and the travelling distance for both ranges from 20 to 100 miles. For holidays, people are willing to travel a farther distance and remain a longer time. Banff and Jasper are the main holiday parks in Alberta, and, like most of this type, are mainly ornamental with some recreational facilities.

The topography of parks may be natural or the result of human effort. They can be created through appropriate planting or leveled and cleared to make playing fields. Location depends largely upon what is available and, particularly in an urban area, may be strongly influenced by topography. A good example of this is the river valley park land in Edmonton.

Finally, all these factors will have a bearing upon the problem of finance and together will determine the cost of providing and maintaining each major park.

PARK PROBLEMS

The discussion which resulted from this re-

port centered mainly on lakeside subdivisions and on the principles of park selection used by the Provincial Parks Board. It was felt that lake frontage in the province is being ruined when lots are strung out along the shore. The results are generally not attractive and the public is being rapidly deprived of many fine locations for recreation. One method of subdivision in Manitoba provincial parks was cited as an example of what can be done. Lakeside communities are planned in the form of a shallow V so that everyone can have a view of the lake, while a large proportion of lake frontage is deeded as public beach.

The question of lot sizes in lakeside subdivisions was raised. Few minimum standards are required by Alberta health laws and although it was agreed that large lots are advisable, limited resources, increasing demand and rising costs have generally produced lot areas similar in size to those in urban residential subdivisions. It was also thought that with the low urban density in the province there was not such a necessity for low densities in the country. A more pressing problem might be the need to provide easily accessible week-end parks for city people. The Parks Board is establishing lakeside areas for public purposes and their selection is determined on the basis of public requests, obvious need, accessibility to the area served and the availability of land.

URBAN USES IN THE COUNTRY

Of particular interest to the regional planner is the problem of urban uses in country areas. Some are incompatible and undesirable, some are undesirable but necessary, while others are essential. Examples of the first are industrial, commercial and

residential developments which locate in the country in order to obtain cheap land. Equipment connected with the oil and mining industries, houses for workers in these districts, drive-in-theatres, power plants, water works, dams and sewage disposal plants, are included within the second group, while service stations, motels and roadside restaurants are examples of urban uses which are essential in the country.

It was suggested at the conference that there should be legislation to control the use of gravel pits in river beds, and that they should be restored to good condition after the gravel is removed. Many communities in Alberta depend upon river valleys and former river beds for park land. This is especially true in the grassland area where only in valley bottoms do trees grow easily.

RURAL COMMUNITY NEEDS

Community patterns established by rural people are fairly well defined but are generally not as obvious as urban patterns. Detailed surveys are required to determine those factors underlying community growth in rural areas. During a study of the M.D. of Stony Plain the Edmonton District staff discovered that the rural pattern may develop due to common social, religious, economic or educational interests of the farm people, or it may be based on ethnic groups.

Rural people have definite planning needs, such as a proper system of market roads leading to major farm centres, and the location and capacity of future schools. To understand these needs a regional planner must be familiar with all the physical and

cultural aspects of the rural landscape. The keynote of rural land use planning is conservation: the land should be put to its most productive use with the least loss of its natural assets. This requires not only a choice between urban and rural land uses but an equally important decision between various types of rural land use. Watershed protection, recreation areas, dams for power and flood control, forestry, agriculture, population resettlement and permanent rural communities are all valid features of rural land use planning.

SHOPPING FACILITIES AND THE FUTURE OF SMALL TOWNS

In his paper, Mr. Smith referred to the fact that the growth of shopping facilities is determined not by the planner but by the investor in private industry who is dependent upon the needs of the people. These needs also determine the pattern of distribution of shopping facilities. However, as requirements are constantly changing, co-operation between the planner and private enterprise is essential in order to develop facilities when and where they are required.

Referring to the future of small towns, it was pointed out that until recently most of the villages in the Calgary area have been dormant for some time. Houses are twenty-five to forty, and sometimes sixty years old. The change that is now discernible is directly related to the increase in transportation. Roads are being improved, and outlying areas are becoming more accessible. This is causing more interest and investment in small towns.

There is also a change in the manner of farm living. With modern machinery and attendant high overhead costs, farms are growing in size. A quarter

section of land, once regarded as an average farm is now the basic minimum and most farms are two to three sections in area. Larger mechanized farm units require fewer people to work them and this factor, together with an increasing tendency even on the part of the farmer to live in the town, is causing urban expansion.

In addition to transportation, industrialization is determining the nature and growth of towns and villages. Planners should promote this growth by encouraging the location of appropriate industries in small towns and villages, with a view to the decentralization of the central metropolis.

There is a second trend which seems to be away from the development of small communities. This is the establishment of regional shopping centers close to the highways and on the fringes of the cities. It is accompanied by an increasing demand for highway sites for service stations and other retail outlets. It is the feeling of the Commission and the municipalities in the Calgary area that development outside the towns and villages should only be of that type which offers some service to the travelling public.

In the discussion following Mr. Smith's paper, it was pointed out that growth in the province before the Leduc oil discovery depended largely upon agricultural production. The post-Leduc period saw a great change with vast increases and fantastic growth, all of which depended on the oil industry. It is this factor that has caused the change in the function of some towns with the result that they have far outstripped their neighbors in development.

Despite the fact that many small communities are now located too close together due to modern

means of transportation, they have not disappeared. Recent market center studies by the Edmonton District Planning Commission show the farmer's shopping dollar is being split, some of his services coming from the larger city and some from the local center. But small communities exhibit a staying power which possibly is due to the provision of other community needs. The motor car, it seems, has not completely altered the pattern of the village but has only made it more flexible.

Some comparison with the larger cities was noted where this same trend is developing. The consumer's dollar is split three ways. Part goes to the local store for small items, part to the neighborhood center for weekly supplies, and part to the city center for larger items such as furniture and clothing. This can be seen in the Red Deer region where the farmers' small goods are purchased in the towns of Lacombe, Penhold and Innisfail, whereas main purchases are made in Red Deer or sometimes even in Edmonton and Calgary. This pattern is becoming more evident as road conditions improve.

Having determined some of the trends of small towns a question was asked about what approach planners should take to the problem. It was finally agreed that if a town was originally based on a supporting agricultural use, then studies as to its future should be based on those agricultural tendencies. If a major industry is the main basis of a town then future tendencies of that industry would be the main factor influencing future growth of the town.

SATELLITE TOWNS

The function of a satellite town is twofold: to help solve the regional problem and to provide a suit-

able urban environment for its citizens. The regional problem is concerned with removing some of the pressure and congestion from the central city so that it can fulfill its main role of providing efficient, highly specialized services for the region.

In order to contribute to the solution of this problem, satellite towns must provide a high proportion of local employment, shopping and professional services in addition to housing. Therefore its location must be one which has easy access to railways, abundant water supply, opportunity to dispose of waste, and good highway connections to the central city. As the satellite town cannot provide all the employment for its citizens, a number must find work in the city. Studies indicate that the distance people will commute is determined by the time required for travelling. This seems to be a maximum of one hour, and roughly defines a boundary beyond which people are discouraged from commuting.

The second function of the satellite town, that of providing a suitable urban environment, depends mainly on the nature of the site, the quality of the design, and the economics of social facilities. The following are some of the requirements of a good location:

- (a) sufficient industrial and commercial development to obtain a sound tax structure,
- (b) sufficient water to meet the present and expected future needs,
- (c) good relationship between industrial and residential land, with pleasant views and sufficient natural features to form the basis of an open area.

PROPOSAL FOR AN EVEN TAX BASE

A proposal to create an Industrial Assessment

Act and its possible effects on the planner's basic ideas about satellite towns formed a major topic of discussion. Such an act would require that taxes collected from industries in a certain municipality be spread over a regional area. This would liberate a town from the necessity of attracting industry. A purely dormitory community could then be established several miles from a main center, for if there is a common tax base for the whole region, the location of industries in relation to towns is of little importance, other things being equal.

It was noted that population groupings would be changed. There could be a complete separation of working and living areas and it would be possible to locate the population in desirable and scenic areas whereas industry would be directed to the poorer areas. Arguments against this proposal were based mainly on the claim that a town without industry has no character and civic pride and would be lost. Planners should be concerned mostly with "the quality of living" and not with the tax base. On the other hand it was stated that industry is not essential in preserving the integrity of the people. All agreed, however, that the mobility of the population would have to be one of the main considerations. Travelling time to and from work would have a large effect on the individual's choice of location.

CHAPTER 3

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTRICT PLANS

INTRODUCTION

Following a statement of objectives and an investigation into some of the elements which make up regional planning, the next topic for the conference was quite naturally how district plans might be implemented. This was covered by two speakers, Mr. A.G. Martin, Calgary City Planner and Mr. H.N. Lash, Director of the Town and Rural Planning Branch.

Mr. Martin's paper referred to the recommendations relating to planning which are included in the findings of the Royal Commission on the Metropolitan Development of Calgary and Edmonton. The report of this commission, which was under the chairmanship of Dr. G.F. McNally, was published in January, 1956, and contains many recommendations relevant to the development of regional planning in the province.

In regard to the achievement of district planning areas, Mr. Lash emphasized that they must grow gradually as prospective members become familiar with the values of planning. In the beginning, at least, membership should not be compulsory. These points were discussed at some length by the conference which also dealt with the organization of enlarged district and the type of technical staff which could eventually be employed by each district commission.

IMPACT OF THE McNALLY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The McNally Commission report contains many recommendations relating to planning. In his paper, Mr. Martin referred to two main proposals found in chapter five of the report:

- (1) the mandatory membership of individual municipalities and the mandatory power of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to see that municipalities do participate in district planning,
- (2) the right of appeal by a municipality to a Provincial Planning Appeal Board in cases of disagreement over decisions of the district planning commission.

The implementation of recommendations concerning annexations to the two cities of Edmonton and Calgary would ultimately affect the role of the district commissions in those cities. It was estimated that about 75% of their administrative activities would be turned over to the cities. Their work would then consist of regional planning for the whole area and urban planning for the communities lying outside the limits of the city.

Submissions to the McNally Commission from the Calgary city and district planning departments advocated the establishment of a future urban area taking into account the existing fringe and an additional area for anticipated city expansion in the next twenty years. In modified form these recommendations appear in the report.

In the Calgary Metropolitan area there is now one planning body but there are five or six municipal-

ities handling local administrative problems. It was felt that one municipality could better administer growth problems as they arise. The ultimate population of the city and environs will not be so large that it could not be handled by a single administrative body or municipality. Problems resulting from highways and ring roads would also be simplified if there was but one municipality to collaborate with the Department of Highways.

For these reasons amalgamation was favoured rather than federation as in the Toronto Metropolitan area. The thirteen municipalities in that area all have a long tradition in running their own affairs which is not the situation of the municipal organizations surrounding Calgary.

During the general discussion, Mr. Gertler claimed that the McNally Commission solution for regional planning was superior to the solution reached in the Toronto area. There, planning authority is given to the Metropolitan Board for areas extending farther than the boundaries of the thirteen municipalities. This may bias the way in which Toronto will grow. In the Alberta recommendations, the boundaries of Edmonton and Calgary would be extended to take in areas for future growth and this gives living space within the service limits of the present utility systems. In addition, the McNally report supports planning in the outlying areas, thus providing the administrative basis for a sound pattern of growth.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DISTRICT PLANNING AREA

On the topic of how district planning areas should grow, Mr. Lash contended that it is not satisfactory to try to sell everyone immediately on reg-

ional planning. Instead, the districts should evolve slowly as a result of local initiative arising from contact between non-members and members of a commission. When municipalities can achieve specific local objectives through membership in a commission, they begin to realize what larger objectives may be achieved by means of regional planning. The provincial office encourages the growth of districts by giving technical advice to small communities and, upon the completion of a planning report, by urging the municipality to join a commission. In addition, the province is willing to add Improvement Districts to planning commission areas, thus giving financial assistance and helping the urban centers control fringe development.

At the present time membership in a planning commission is neither compulsory nor permanent and it was felt that the withdrawal or threatened withdrawal of unsatisfied municipalities lessened the effectiveness of the planning body. The Edmonton District municipalities favour mandatory membership and this was advocated by the McNally Commission. The recommendation referred to Edmonton and Calgary, however, and would not necessarily apply to other planning commissions. However, the possibility of a municipality wishing to withdraw from a commission might be reduced through its right of appeal to the Provincial Planning Advisory Board, as recommended in the McNally Report.

It was agreed by the conference that municipalities could not be forced into districts and that voluntary joining was a necessary first step in the evolution of regional planning. New commissions must be established on this basis. Mandatory membership might be acceptable to a well established district planning commission, but a system which provided

for the differences in development between new and established districts would be needed. As an alternative, some type of semi-permanent membership could be adopted in which support for a planning program would be guaranteed but limited to a certain number of years. This would ensure continuity and yet leave the municipalities free to feel that they were not permanently bound to the commission.

THE ORGANIZATION OF ENLARGED DISTRICTS

All planning commissions differ in some respects. The organizations do not follow a common pattern, and each changes as it develops. In the Edmonton District it has been found that there are factors affecting one municipality directly that may affect another municipality indirectly. Things of this nature are naturally brought before the commission. In addition, activities that affect only one municipality may be governed by policies set out by the commission, although they are administered by the local planning staff without reference to the commission. There are special committees to evolve policies which, when approved, are administered by the staff. In the Red Deer Planning District everything was submitted to the commission during the initial stages of the organization. But as time went on the technical staff was authorized to handle more and more of the routine affairs until now the commission deals almost exclusively with matters of major concern. Important problems that may arise between commission meetings are handled by an executive committee.

Each enlarged district will require a well-diversified planning staff. It was suggested that most commissions could not afford all the necessary technicians. Specialists should be employed by the pro-

vincial planning office and be available to the districts for special studies. The Red Deer Commission now employs consultants for various engineering and traffic studies but there are many fields in which there are no practising consultants. It was felt that unless a central body, such as the provincial office, had specialists available, there might not be any way of having the necessary specialized work undertaken. In opposition to this view it was argued that as development of the province continues and planning areas are enlarged, all commissions would ultimately be in a position to engage and occupy their own complement of trained planning technicians.

CHAPTER 4

CURRENT PLANNING PROBLEMS

INTRODUCTION

In a special session on current planning problems, and during two round table discussions, the members of the conference covered several topics which are of particular interest to planners in Alberta. At the first meeting a statement on problems related to utility easements was presented by four private companies. Considerable debate resulted from the brief and changes in procedure were suggested for future consideration. Additional subjects considered at the round table discussions dealt with several problems which planners frequently meet but rarely have an opportunity to discuss together. These three meetings proved to be an important feature of the 1956 Planners' Conference.

UTILITY EASEMENTS

Mr. J.D. Park from the Calgary office of the law firm of Milner, Steer and Company, presented a brief on behalf of four utility companies: Northwestern Utilities Ltd., Canadian Western Natural Gas Co. Ltd., and Northland Utilities Ltd.

During the last several years these companies have had certain of their rights in lands affected without their knowledge or consent and in some instances rather serious consequences have resulted. Mr. Park cited several examples which roughly fall into three categories:

- (1) where the utility company has an easement over a parcel and where the owner subdivides, dedicating the easement as part of a street.
- (2) where streets or lanes containing utilities were cancelled and consolidated in title with adjacent lands, and
- (3) where streets or lanes containing utilities were cancelled by way of replotting schemes and where these street and lane portions became parts of lots under the replotting schemes.

As there is no provision for reference to them, the companies were not consulted before the cancellations or schemes were put into effect although generally they had an easement or franchise with the municipality concerned. The companies claim they have no assurance that their utilities will not be damaged or destroyed on land where they have been legally installed. It was pointed out that the Calgary Land Titles Office does require reference to a utility company before registering a plan that affects a company's easement but this seemed to be the only office with an adequate system.

Mr. Park suggested that:

- (1) the Surveyor to the Land Titles Office should not register any plans affecting utility easements unless such plans are signed on behalf of the company concerned.
- (2) where a street or lane is to be closed, the secretary-treasurer of the local municipality should be required to file a Statutory Declaration with the Registrar, indicating that no utility company possesses the right to install utilities or other equipment in the streets or lanes affected. Should a company have rights, then the consent in writing of the company should be obtained.

If this procedure is not satisfactory the companies request that some other effective solution be found and put into operation.

As cities own their streets and lanes and have all records concerning them, the major problem in closing streets and lanes lies outside the cities, where public roads are owned by the Crown. Applications for closing are normally made to the Board of Public Utility Commissioners. Before issuing the necessary closing order the Board requires approval from the Director of Surveys of the Department of Highways, the Director of Town and Rural Planning, and the local municipality.

The Alberta Government Telephones had a similar problem concerning the cancellation of streets and lanes. However, this was satisfactorily solved by arrangement with the Director of Surveys. Now the Director sends a print showing a proposed cancellation to the Alberta Government Telephones with a form letter asking them to advise the Board of Public Utility Commissioners if any of their polelines are affected. This system seems to have worked well and perhaps a similar system would solve the problems of the utility companies. For replotting schemes a combination of these systems might work.

The procedure in the Calgary office is to send a print of all tentative plans, or of any proposals to cancel streets or lanes, to the utility companies. Mr. Park did not think that this system totally solved the problem because, although the company concerned might be advised of street changes, there is still no way in which it can do anything about them. Mr. Martin explained that the Calgary District Planning Commission does nothing further with a tentative plan until they know if a utility company is affected. If it

is concerned they deal with the problem by either adjusting the plan so that the thoroughfares coincide with the utilities or ask the company to replace the utility lines at the expense of the owner. Unfortunately there has been at least one breakdown in the procedure which led to fairly serious consequences.

It was suggested that the Calgary system might be implemented within district planning areas. Mr. Park felt that it might help the problem but would not completely solve it.

If all the utility companies interested in tentative plans were known, circulation of the plans would be relatively simple. If the provincial planning office had a map showing the areas of jurisdiction of all the utility companies, a scheme for the reference of tentative plans to them could be worked out for the areas outside planning districts. For replotting schemes it is more difficult because generally a tentative plan is not submitted. Where a cancellation is by judge's order, the provincial office is not consulted. In a cancellation of that type the municipality passes a by-law closing the thoroughfare and applies directly to the Minister of Highways for approval. After approval is granted an application is made to a judge for the required order.

Where a utility company has a vested interest in the land these problems might be caught at the Land Titles Office, but this would not apply where utilities lay in streets or lanes. In that situation it might be unfair for the municipality to be prevented from closing a street or lane just because a utility company objected to the closure.

A discussion followed in which Mr. Park stated that utility companies under their existing franchises

do not have absolute right to use streets and lanes, as provision for thoroughfare closures are written into the franchises. Power is vested with the local authority and the companies have to comply with the wishes of the council. The utility companies also do not feel that they are being dealt with fairly when they pay the full value of the land for an easement but do not take title. Later if the owner subdivides and dedicates the easement as a street, it is lost by the company. All these costs are passed on to the consumer and higher rates result.

The conference did not reach any definite conclusions on this matter but referred it to the Steering Committee for appropriate action.

COMPARABILITY OF DATA

It was generally agreed by the conference that standards for mapping of survey material and compilation of statistical data should be worked out for the whole province. Until uniformity is achieved it is impossible to derive much benefit from the comparison of data collected by different planning agencies in Alberta. The Steering committee of the conference was authorized to appoint a working committee to undertake the necessary basic studies.

Several points which could be included as items on the committee's work program were discussed. It was suggested that an outline should be made showing which basic survey maps should be prepared by the district planning commissions and which by the provincial office. As there is now a lack of map co-operation between planning organizations in the province, a standard land use legend should be adopted. A third suggestion was that the punch card

system employed by the Provincial office for the analysis of dwelling survey data could be extended throughout the province. By using standard data sheets this system would offer valuable results and a means of easy comparison.

Finally, it was pointed out that in order to benefit from proposed standardization in the not too distant future, there is a problem of getting certain districts caught up in the basic surveys. It was suggested that it might be accomplished through loan of staff between organizations.

While the need for standardization in gathering data was generally agreed upon, the thought of carrying it further to uniformity in method, possibly coordinated by the provincial office, was met with some scepticism. It was decided to turn this problem over to the working committee for further study, on the basis of which the desirable degree of uniformity could be decided.

During the discussion on uniformity of method, attention was particularly focussed on population forecasts. It was pointed out that the proportions between various employment groups arrived at in the economic base study now being undertaken by the Edmonton District Planning Commission, would appear far more valid if they could be supported by results from similar studies undertaken in other Alberta cities.

PLANNING DIRECTOR MEETINGS

The directors of the district planning commissions and the provincial planning branch favoured the idea of meeting more frequently. It was decided to arrange a meeting every second month alternately

in each of the five district centers, with the Alberta Planners' Conference as the season's climax. Such meetings would be of particular value to the smaller districts where the director, usually the only planner in the area, has very few opportunities to discuss his problems with other planners.

A POLICY OF DECENTRALIZATION

In regard to the relation of city and metropolitan growth to development in parts of the province, the Edmonton District Planning Commission has adopted a policy of decentralization. But it is yet undecided if growth should be guided to areas within the district only. Should the growth in part, be channelled to more distant places which are outside the commission's sphere of influence, such as Camrose, Wetaskiwin or even Red Deer? If the latter, would it be the responsibility of the province or of the district planning commissions to take the necessary steps?

The city of Red Deer in relation to the cities of Edmonton and Calgary was given as an example of decentralized growth extending beyond existing as well as proposed district planning boundaries. Red Deer has gradually taken over some functions and services which formerly were performed by the two larger cities in the central Alberta area.

Some members felt that the responsibility of undertaking the necessary surveys, and introducing the required measures, was ultimately a job for the provincial office. However, it seemed that not much could be done until at least a reasonable amount of infilling had taken place within the proposed planning area boundaries. It was decided that the question of the distribution of growth was of sufficient importance to be studied by the working committee.

EDUCATION OF PLANNING STAFF

Mr. Marlyn reported that a Town Planning Institute Committee had been formed to draw up a tentative program by which student members of the institute could prepare themselves for associate membership. This program would consist of a series of weekly two hour seminars to be conducted by Institute members. If possible, suitable University courses could be taken by the student as part of his training. The minimum qualification for the course would be grade 12 education, and one year of experience in a planning office. It would be a four year course but a student who felt that he was ready to qualify for associate membership could sit for the qualifying examination at the end of only one or two years study. Each student would select an associate member as a tutor who would guide his studies particularly in that phase of planning in which he wished to specialize.

At its last annual meeting the Institute had passed new by-laws which provided for an examination and a thesis before entrance as an associate member. Student members may hold that status for only four years. Therefore the by-law implies some system of study but does not outline any course. A board of examiners has been appointed but has not yet decided upon any policy.

It was found that the University of Alberta Extension Department was interested and would cooperate in outlining a course, part of which could possibly be in the form of certain lectures at the university in connection with other subjects. After much discussion it became evident that there was one basic question to be decided: should the Institute concentrate on qualifying only the ten or fifteen student members in planning offices in Alberta at present or

should a much wider scope be undertaken by the University Extension Department for not only planning staffs but for other interested persons as well? The latter might be a means of attracting people into the planning field.

A representative of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation felt that a basic course could be established for both student planners and valuers as work undertaken by both groups is similar. Then, after one or two years each group would branch out into its own particular field.

CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

A major problem facing planners in regard to long range planning is that the Capital Works Program is carried out on a year to year basis. There is little assurance that the funds needed for major works will be available at the required time in the future.

It was noted that in Vancouver a Committee consisting of representatives of the Health, School, Engineering, Recreation and Planning Departments together with the City Commissioners has been established to draw up a five year capital expenditures program. It was suggested that, as the Technical Planning Boards of Calgary and Edmonton are comparable to the Vancouver Committee, the Boards might be responsible for drawing up long range programs for the two cities. Co-ordination between the work program and the money available could then be achieved.

A final point brought out in this session was that the growth of a town or city is not always constant, and the demand for services varies with the

rate of growth. It would be better, therefore, to relate the budget for capital expenditures to population increase rather than to a time period.

VISUAL ASPECTS OF URBAN PLANNING

The Chairman, Mr. Lurie, stated that more architectural control of the city center to improve its aesthetic qualities should be exercised. The visual aspects of civic centers should especially be controlled to ensure conformity in design. In Israel, he pointed out, the overall scheme in urban design is considered more important than the individual building. As a result an Architectural Panel has been formed to ensure that the design of a proposed building is in harmony with those in the surrounding area. One method used by the Panel is to set the building outline and then turn it over to an architect for detail designing.

It was suggested that landscaping was possibly more important than the design of buildings. Beautifying the traffic arteries and river valleys, and the placing of special planning controls on the buildings adjoining these areas, would create a more desirable visual aspect. A practical way to achieve this would be for all plans to show building set backs, heights and types of buildings. Under interim development control, it was noted, three dimensional plans could be required but the idea is not yet popularly accepted and good relations between the public and the planning department must first be established.

With regard to residential areas, it seemed to be a case of aesthetics versus economics. What the planner would like to see may be difficult for the builder to sell, although some Alberta cities already have positive results to the contrary.

There is also the problem of ensuring harmonious development without monotony. One way to obtain variation is to allocate lots to different types of houses. This must, however, be done according to an overall plan to achieve good results, otherwise chaos results. Another of the planner's greatest problems is to prevent the contractor from entirely clearing the site. At the time of development some restrictions should be imposed to ensure that certain specified trees are not destroyed. The hiring of a landscape architect was also felt desirable for it was realized that there is a great difference in planting an area to a geometrical pattern and achieving an overall picture with a pleasing visual aspect. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation has a landscaping service available to private developers and the conference felt that this fact should be advertised more vigorously by the cities and that developers should be encouraged to make use of this service.

CHAPTER 5

COMMITTEE REPORTS FROM THE 1956 PLANNERS' CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

After the 1955 meeting of Alberta planners, the steering committee had appointed various groups to investigate projects suggested during the conference proceedings. Written reports from these committees were presented during the final session of the 1956 Conference. However, due to a limited amount of time available, it was decided that each committee chairman should briefly outline the contents of the report, giving particular attention to any recommendations which had been made. The steering committee was reappointed for another year and was authorized to act upon the recommendations and to set up new committees as it deemed advisable.

COMMITTEE ON THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Chairman: Mr. F. Marlyn

As the committee sought approval for a new approach to the arrangement of the technical content of the regulations, and also considering the extensive ground to be covered under this heading, the committee had chosen to present its report as a summary of recommendations only. However, quite extensive detailed studies had been undertaken and were available as a guide for reshaping the regulations.

The first paragraph of the report outlining the proposed principles was agreed to by the Conference after 'Public Buildings' had been added as a separate item to the list of main headings.

Without going into further detail the Conference then referred the report to the Provincial Planning Advisory Board for approval in principle, at the same time requesting that the committee be given an opportunity to check the revised regulations prior to their adoption.

COMMITTEES ON REPLOTTING SCHEMES

Chairman: Mr. W.R. Brown

The chairman of the committee had encountered difficulties in his attempts to arrange meetings. Only one of the committee members had reacted on his request for written contributions, and consequently no recommendations had been drafted.

It was moved and carried that the committee should be re-established in order to complete its work.

COMMITTEE ON THE ACQUISITION AND ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC RESERVES

Chairman: Mr. J.B. Gee

The recommendations of the committee report, which was based mainly on points raised during the 1955 Conference, were discussed. Although Appendix B of the report was not available, the Conference felt that it was able to approve in principle the

recommendations set out on page 2 in the committee report under (a), (b), (c), and (d). Beyond that the report was referred to the steering committee for further study, to be followed by appropriate action. Particular attention was to be given to the principle of payment in certain cases as a possible alternative to the provisions of Public Reserve.

COMMITTEE ON SUBDIVISIONS AND TRANSFER ADMINISTRATION

Chairman: Mr. A. R. Smith

As the conference went through the committee report the following adjustments were made:

Section 18 Subsection (2)

Add Utilities to the list of information required.

Add onto the end of (II) and dimensions of same.

The report was approved with the above changes and referred to the steering committee for appropriate action, the new application form to be checked by that committee prior to adoption.

COMMITTEE ON ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW DISTRICT PLANNING AREAS

Chairman: Mr. H. N. Lash

The report was not examined by the conference as the subject had already been thoroughly dealt with in previous sessions.

It was decided to refer the report to the Provincial Planning Advisory Board for their attention

with the recommendation that it be used as a guide for the establishment of new District Planning Areas and the enlargement of existing ones.

COMMITTEE ON REGISTRY SYSTEM FOR PLANNING DECISIONS

Chairman: Mr. H. Toogood

The report was received for information by the conference, and referred to the provincial planning authorities as such.

COMMITTEE ON NEW TOWNS

Chairman: Mr. H.N. Lash

Although the committee had not produced a report the chairman indicated that positive results had been achieved during the past year. At the time the committee was formed, no legislation governing the development of new towns existed. However, in the meantime a New Towns Act had been passed by the legislature, and the Committee had been given the opportunity of checking the draft and making their comments.

COMMITTEE ON CO-OPERATION BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Chairman: Mr. L. Gertler

As time was running out only a couple of the questions raised in the committee report were dealt with.

The committee's doubt as to the need for reference of approved final plans from the District Planning Commissions to the provincial office was given particular attention by the provincial director, who for several reasons felt that it was a good arrangement to have a final check by the provincial office. First there is always a chance that a decision dictated by local politics might be forced upon the local planner. At the same time the provincial office may not always find that personnel fully qualified for subdivision review are on the staff of all approving authorities. Finally it was pointed out that the Province of Saskatchewan employs a procedure somewhat similar to the one suggested by the committee, and occurrences such as changes in the final plans seem to indicate that it does not work.

This report was referred to the steering committee without attached recommendations.

APPENDIX A

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES IN 1957

Passed by the Alberta Legislature in April, 1957, Bill 110 amending the Town and Rural Planning Act contains important changes facilitating a major advance in the effectiveness of planning in the Province.

First of all, it gives added stability to the District Planning Commissions by making all organizational changes dependent on the recommendations of the Provincial Planning Advisory Board. In future the withdrawal of any member from an existing Commission, as well as the addition of new members and the creation of new commissions, will require the sanction of the Provincial Board to become effective (Section 10). Thus it will no longer be possible for one dissident member to prejudice a commissions existence or the effectiveness of its work through either threatened or actual withdrawal. The requirement that the Board's approval be obtained to all changes in organization and membership, is strengthened by the new statutory obligation (Section 86) that members shall pay their proper share of the commission's operating expenses. The strengthening of these requirements is balanced by new provisions (Section 13) for the review by the Provincial Board, on request, of the financial and other arrangements of any commission, so that any member may appeal against what it feels to be inequitable treatment. All of the above changes grew out of past experience as crystallized in the words of the "McNally" Royal Commission on the Metropolitan Development of Edmonton and Calgary that:

"It is impossible to draw or carry out a district general plan without the participation of all municipalities in the area. Every member municipality should take its part in shaping the plan and carrying it out."

Secondly, Bill 110 gives added local responsibility to all municipalities served by professional planning staff, by removing zoning appeals to the Provincial Board in such cases, thus cutting out the succession of several appeals which heretofore has delayed decisions and facilitated "buck-passing" to avoid making unpopular or controversial decisions. The local Appeal Board in many cases will now be the single and final appeal body, thus adding to local responsibility and furthering the decentralization of planning authority which has long been accepted policy in the Province.

The Provincial Board will still hear zoning appeals from municipalities without qualified planning staff, as well as all subdivision appeals as heretofore. However, it will be able in future to devote more time to the consideration of policy matters, free of the intrusion of many essentially local disputes.

Thirdly, Bill 110 adds a whole new Part IV to the Town and Rural Planning Act, giving certain district planning commissions the power to adopt (with a two-thirds affirmative vote) a district plan binding on all the member municipalities. This new Part applies to District Planning areas in which the central city has a population of 50,000 or more, where it is considered that problems of city growth will begin to seriously affect the whole of the planning region. The provisions of this Part may also be extended to other districts where the central city is not this large but where conditions, in the opinion of the Provincial Board, make this step desirable. This new Part of the Act for the first time gives these selected commissions executive as well as merely advisory powers. It is now incumbent upon these commissions to prepare a District General Plan, preceded as an interim measure by a simplified version called a Preliminary District Plan. The implementation of these District Plans is provided for by the requirement (Section 109) that all member municipalities must revise their existing by-laws, adopt new by-laws, and take such other action as may

be necessary to ensure that local control of subdivision and land use conform in all respects with the provision of the District Plan when adopted.

The Provincial Board will act as an appeal body to settle disputes between commission members or between individual members and the commission as a whole (Sections 120-123), in such cases as failure to agree on the adoption or amendment of a district plan, or failure of a council to enforce or comply with an adopted district plan. The Board in making its decision must have regard to the general intent of this Part of the Act, as well as the general intent and scope of the district plan. The Board may settle the content of a district plan and any by-law made in conformity with the plan, determine whether a district plan is being enforced or complied with, require a commission to amend a district plan, or require a council to amend or enforce a by-law so as to conform with the district plan.

The first results of this new Part IV will be the preparation by the Edmonton and Calgary District Planning Commissions of land use plans for the whole of the district planning areas, including such zones as: general urban, new general urban, major industrial, highway commercial, smallholdings, high density agricultural, low density agricultural, and district recreational. The member municipalities (both urban and rural) must then control development in accordance with the adopted district plan. The municipalities retain the power to adopt more detailed zoning within the broad zoning proposals of the district plan.

The district plan affects local plans only with respect to major land uses of concern to more than one municipality. Administrative responsibility remains clear-cut and undivided since the individual municipalities are still the issuing authorities for development permits and building permits.

The Act thus provides for effective land use planning

for whole city regions, and the co-ordination of local land use plans, while ensuring minimum interference with local plans, and without changing existing administrative procedures for dealing with development applications.

It is hoped that this strengthening of the district planning machinery will enable the Province to avoid the more or less uncontrolled and unlimited suburban sprawl characteristic of so much of the North American Continent.

